



# State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

## **State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Lincoln Firefighter's Reception Hall February 10, 2009**

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "conferences & meetings" at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Katie Durfee, Alvin Fox, Sue Gieschen, Gayle Hahn, Jason Kerkman, Les Kimmons, Tim Kolb, Frank Lloyd, Larry Niemeyer, Vicki Obrecht, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Angela Smith, Pearl VanZandt

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mitch Arnold, Debra Osentowski, Terry Wilson

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Don Crouch, Jack Shepard, Kristi Berst, Teri Effle, Jim Coyle

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was given.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order. The Public Meetings Law was posted on the back table.

Pearl VanZandt shared that LB449 changes the disability retirement allowance provisions of the School Employees Retirement Act. The bill allows for disabled teachers to work up to 15 hours per week. The hearing is scheduled in March.

Don Crouch shared that Mitch Arnold was a 2008 winner in the Midland's Business Journal, Greater Omaha entrepreneurs, executives and business professional men and women under 40.

Don Crouch welcomed Kipp Ransom back to work and to good health. Kipp shared that he has had many surgeries to help combat infections in his elbow.

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Alvin Fox moved and Sue Gieschen seconded a motion to accept the agenda as presented. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 14, 2008 MEETING MINUTES**

Tim Kolb moved and Jason Kerkman seconded a motion to approve the October 14, 2008 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR SERVICES**

Discussion was held around Frank Lloyd's interview on the radio about the Lincoln VR office move. A piece was also done on an Omaha television station.

Vicki Obrecht shared that the Lincoln teachers have added VR staff to the IEP team so that they are able to copy or view the most recent reports for their clients that are posted on the IEP web system. The process has been well received.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL PRESENTATION**

Teri Effle, prevention coordinator at the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs, provided a presentation on the use of drugs and what to look for in the workplace. She gives this presentation to all new VR staff. The presentation covered street drugs and the abuse of over-the-counter and prescription drugs as well as how to recognize them and drug paraphernalia. Meth and cocaine are two of the major concerns in Nebraska.

## **REVIEW OF VR STATISTICS**

Don Crouch shared the performance on the Federal Standards for the period October 1 – December 31, 2008. A handout was provided showing all the standards being met. Discussion was held on how the unemployment rate is affecting VR. It was stated that with more workers in the pool, you have to do your homework to make sure the application and resume are the best they can be. VR offices have seen an increase in the number of clients coming to them.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Frank Lloyd provided the Director's Report.

### Stimulus Package

The Federal Stimulus Package outlines \$500 million to VR services which would bring \$3 million to Nebraska. The funds must be spent over a two-year period with no maintenance of effort provision and no state match required. Frank reported that they are working on a plan to make the best use of these funds. They will not be used to do more of what is already being done. The funds will be used in a way that will stimulate new jobs such as: transition scholarships, community college training programs, and equipment training.

### Technical Assistance Center

The National Technical Assistance Center is working toward attaining a better national performance from VR offices. They are developing a planning and goal setting model for states to use.

### Poverty Training

Mark Schultz is working with Jody Farr to provide poverty training to all VR staff. Jody presents a model that VR staff can use when working with people in poverty. They will be working to see if the process can be changed in a way that will be more suitable for people who live in poverty so they can become successfully employed.

### New Office

The new VR Office on North 27<sup>th</sup> street has created positive attention. Frank has had the opportunity to describe the planning and resource center that will be available. The Center for People in Need will be housed there as well making joint initiatives easier. They plan to move to the new office in May.

### 2009 VR Appropriation

The cost of living will be factored in to the 2009 appropriation. The Governor has flat-lined the program at this point but VR staff suspect that they will provide a match for all federal dollars. The appropriation hearing will be held in March.

### Goodwill Industries

Dennis King is setting up a fee-for-service for Goodwill Industries to provide services for people with a brain injury.

### **FEEDBACK ON EMPLOYER AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

Members shared their experiences at Employer Award Presentations.

- Jason Kerkman attended at the Lincoln site. The UNL Maintenance Department was awarded. The Chancellor was present and time was allowed for the Department to talk about the experience.
- Angela Smith attended the award ceremony at a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Kearney.
- Vicki Rasmussen attended in Grand Island at a Chamber of Commerce meeting. VR staff talked about what their services were and the employer talked about what they get from VR.
- Gayle Hahn attended the York site at Chamber of Commerce meeting. They shared how many VR clients they had employed over the years.
- Les Kimmons attended the Omaha presentation at the Mayor's office and the Mayor didn't show. He had to smooth over some unhappy feelings.

### **CAP REPORT**

Vicki Rasmussen provided a CAP report. Vicki has just joined the Poverty Committee and is working on a post-secondary video to help clients know about the requirements. She is also working with the Commission for the Blind to provide training to each of the VR offices.

### **SILC REPORT**

Tim Kolb reported that SILC met last week. Two key legislative items they are watching are LB590 and LB610. LB590 is designed to change the Disabled Persons and Family Support Act to provide financial compensation and special food and medical needs provided by families. Tim reported that this bill allows for family caregivers to be paid and receive insurance like a state employed caregiver. LB610 will change the Medicaid limitation provisions relating to services for persons with disabilities.

### **ATP REPORT**

Angela Smith shared an Assistive Technology success story: A young man with a back injury was able to stay employed as a dog groomer with the aid of a hydraulic table. Transition Success Story: A student checked out some software from the ATP lending library. As he found it useful, the school and parent were able to get him a computer and the software.

### **YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Kristi Berst announced that the Youth Leadership Council is now in place. The first meeting will be held March 7, in Kearney. With the help of the review committee they narrowed down the applicants to 14 youth from across the state. The Council is very diverse with 9 girls and 5 boys, ages 15-19. The youth can help decide how to promote the Council and determine how to get even further diversification. They have already been approached to take part in a few conferences. The council will meet 4-5 times per year. Transportation wasn't a large issue for the youth as most

parents were willing to bring them. The value of the Council to the youth was the leadership opportunity and the opportunity to be a role-model. Regional Councils will be developed down the road.

#### **CLIENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Kipp Ransom shared that survey results are coming in. Most comments have been very good. If the office computer was unavailable, the person did not complete a survey and sometimes staff forgot to give the survey. Staff should be reminded that it is an option to take the hard copy home and send it in. The Council was in agreement that consumers should be given the opportunity to complete a survey. A poster could be put up to remind the consumer that they have an opportunity to do a survey if the staff forgets to ask.

A motion was made by Kipp Ransom and seconded by Tim Kolb that the survey process be continued and emphasized across the state. There was no objection to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

The web site has been updated. The SRC member's names and term is all that is listed with no personal contact information.

#### **EMPLOYER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

- Jason Kerkman recommended that there be an "Entrepreneur of the Year" award for someone who has started a business. He suggested that this award could be given during the summer to either one or several people who are self-employed. This would provide an opportunity to share how VR works with self employment.

A motion was made by Jason Kerkman and seconded by Alvin Fox that an "Entrepreneur of the Year" be awarded, numbers to be determined. There was no objection to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

- 32 senators have replied that they will be at the luncheon on February 17. The luncheon starts at noon in room 1023 at the State Capitol Building. The brochure that will be distributed at the luncheon was shared and reviewed.
- Erin Riley from Project Search in Cincinnati will be in Nebraska speaking to hospitals about hiring individuals with disabilities. Her schedule was shared.
- Jim Coyle with Employment Services is working on creating a video for young adults that gives advice on employment retention.
- The Social Security Administration, Ticket to Work program, is working to get businesses to apply to the Employment Network. It is important to get the word out about this program.

#### **TRANSITION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

- Angela Smith shared that the transition booklet will be back from the Print Shop soon. A copy was passed around.
- The Transition Round Table will be held in June. Special education verification will be one of the main topics.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on April 14 at the Country Inn & Suites in Lincoln.